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## **THE GLASS CEILING: STRUCTURAL, CULTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAREER BARRIERS FOR FRENCH AND TURKISH WOMEN EXECUTIVES**

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**Abstract:** This study is particularly focused on the glass ceiling issues and the main career obstacles for female executives based on the findings of a cross-country comparative study between Turkey and France. Prior to collecting the required data, a review was carried out in both countries, the current available and attitudinal studies related to the concept of the 'glass ceiling'. A comparative descriptive analysis was conducted to show differences in career barriers for women between countries. The field study of this project generated 20 semi-structured interviews with 12 main questions concerning their career background and the glass ceiling syndrome with staff from 12 international companies in both France and Turkey. Interviews lasted approximately for one hour and were conducted in French, Turkish and English. After successively analyzing all the transcripts of the interviews, three ideological approaches have been identified from the field study. The three main topics that were mentioned by the women interviewed in both countries were personal Compromises, Career Encouragers, and Corporate Culture. These findings indicated that there were several similar approaches to helping the career advancement of women in both countries and also different approaches which are unique to each country involved in the study.

**Keywords:** Career barriers, glass ceiling, women in management, Turkey, France.

# **THE GLASS CEILING: STRUCTURAL, CULTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAREER BARRIERS FOR FRENCH AND TURKISH WOMEN EXECUTIVES**

## **Introduction**

“Women at work” has been an important topic of conversation and organizational strategy for over 100 years, and certainly in the last two or three decades. US corporations, in particular, have decided to improve the work experience of women. Their strategy has focused on breaking through the glass ceiling. The “glass ceiling” is one of the most compelling metaphors for analyzing inequalities between men and women in the workplace. The expression has been used widely in the popular media as well as in official government reports and academic publications (Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration 1994; Catalyst 1990; Garland 1991; Scandura 1992; State of Wisconsin Task Force on the Glass Ceiling Initiative 1993; U.S. Department of Labor 1991). The image suggests that although it may now be the case that women are able to get through the front door of managerial hierarchies, at some point they hit an invisible barrier that blocks any further upward movement. As one of the early writers who used the metaphor commented, the glass ceiling is “a transparent barrier that kept women from rising above a certain level in corporations. It applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women” (Morrison A.M. 1987, 13).

The main objective of this paper is to draw attention to the barriers facing female executive directors, even after they have been promoted to middle and top level. These barriers appear to constitute a ‘second glass ceiling’ at the highest levels within large French and Turkish companies. The increasing number of women in the labor force particularly those of childbearing age, has been accompanied by increasing needs for childcare, flexible working arrangements and greater demands for equality in the workplace.

This study particularly focused on the glass ceiling issues and the main career obstacles for female top managers/executives in Turkey and France. Prior to collecting the required data, a review was carried out in both countries, the current availability, and attitudinal studies related to the ‘glass ceiling’. A comparative descriptive analysis was conducted to show differences in career barriers for women and policies between countries. The field study of this project generated 20 semi-structured interviews with 12 main questions concerning their career background and the glass ceiling syndrome with staff from 12 international companies in France and in Turkey. Interviews lasted for approximately one hour and were conducted in France and Turkey.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 1 offers a selective review of literature on the ‘glass ceiling’ and related gender issues and also theoretical framework of research. Section

2describes the methodology, data and discusses the results. In Section 3, I set out the discussion and in Section 4 the paper was completed withmy conclusion.

## **1. Literature Review**

### **1.1. Women's participation in the workforce**

Women's advancement in management career can be influenced by the individual factors within the person, organizational factors which are located within the organization, and societal and systemic factors (Fagenson, 1990).Cultural and social attitudes towards what constitutes "male" or "female" jobs result in occupational segregation, although the extent of the problem varies from country to country and from job to job. It is important to keep in mind that there are important institutional differences between countries, notably regarding their educational and academic systems. (Women in management, Update 2004,)

However, an increasing number of companies are realizing that women need some time out and have undertaken attempts to encourage women to remain in their careers for longer, as the participation of women is vital to the diversity and to the successes of corporations (George, 2005).While women have increased their numbers in management positions, they have made only a few inroads into senior executive positions (Davidson & Burke, 2000; Catalyst 2009, 2004; Stroh et al. 1992).

On the other side, Laufer indicates that the "different needs" of women lead them to create a self-imposed glass ceiling, falsely believing that a glass ceiling would block their careers. Confronted with the ever-present glass ceiling, it is no longer possible, as has often been the case, to talk about the "choice of women in favor of their family" when explaining the absence of women in applying for certain vacancies, whilst today, many women manage both a successful career and a family. It is therefore necessary to "shift the focus" to give more weight to the organizational obstacles outlined here.(Laufer J., 2004).Kane, Parsons and Associates (1982) found that women feel the need to choose between career and family.

However, the idea that women are not interested in high hierarchical positions due to the difficulty of reconciliation is increasingly challenged. Thus, the 2004 Catalyst study, "corporate leadership: same workplace, different realities" shows that there are as many women executives who aim at reaching the CEO position as there are men and that there are even more women with children at home would like a top management position (55% against 46%).

Finally, the realization of organizational work /family initiatives is perceived to pave the way for women to make it to the top. It is noted that individual variables such as gender, marital status, job of husband and number of children have an impact on work and family conflict. (Cinamon& Rich, 2005). Especially as programs such as child care support services, maternity leave arrangements or part-time working enables women to balance their family needs without sacrificing work (Straub, 2007). Powell (1999) mentioned that the "typical executive job has enormous responsibilities, time demands and pressures, which eventually calls for considerable sacrifices in personal life". As a consequence, women are often less

willing than men to make such substantial sacrifices as many want to have children, spend time with the family or simply do not want such a big responsibility in their daily business life. (Akpınar-Sposito, 2011)

The metaphor of the glass ceiling seems to be confirmed by casual observation. It does not take systematic research to notice that a much higher proportion of women have lower management positions and fewer women are chief executive officers bottom supervisors than of chief executive officers are women. Data from the comparative project in class analysis (Wright 1989, 1997) indicate that at the bottom of managerial hierarchies in most economically developed countries, around 25 to 30 percent of lower-level supervisors are women. In contrast, there are just a small percentage of female top executives and CEOs in large corporations. On average, women in all European countries hold 40% of full-time jobs, 32% of management positions and 20% of executive positions. These findings follow similar studies, which indicate that women hold nearly half of all jobs.

According to Fierman (1990), fewer than 0.5 percent of the 4,012 highest paid managers in top companies in the United States are women, while fewer than 5 percent of senior management in the Fortune 500 corporations are women and people from minority groups. Reskin and Padavic (1994, 84) report that “although women held half of all federal government jobs in 1992 and made up 86 percent of the government’s clerical workers, they were only a quarter of supervisors and only a tenth of senior executives.”

Similar patterns occur in other countries: In Denmark, women represented 14.5 percent of all managers and administrators but only between 1 and 5 percent of top managers; in Japan, women counted for 7.5 percent of all administrators and managers but only 0.3 percent of top management in the private sector (Reskin and Padavic 1994).

The research performed by Bagues&Esteve-Volart (2007) found an extremely low percentage of women in supervisory and management positions, in both the private and public sector. In Italy and France, 3% and 4% respectively, of the 50 largest companies’ board directors are women. In the US, women only made up 3, 4% of the top level management back in 1997. However, in Europe, none of the 25 highest earning CEOs are female (Emerald, 2006). These numbers already indicate that women are faced with discrimination in terms of possibilities for promotion, which is especially likely to occur in management and can extend further to pay disparities between men and women across occupational categories.

In both Turkey and France the majority of top managers are male. Age, marital status, jobs of the parents, number of children, job tenure, education, age of children, job of the husband are completely related concerning the career advancement of women.

The CNRS, the French national research body has found that in France, the majority of women executives work in companies, in the public sector or in the universities. Thereby, there are: 17% of women, who work as an executive, 31%, are in administration and sales, 12.5 % work in the Public Sector and 49% work for the State.

In Turkey, the glass ceiling exists in all sectors as it does worldwide, including in the public and private sectors as well as nongovernmental organizations. Turkish women – 52% of the 70 million populations – earn 40% less than men and provide just a quarter of the registered labor force, while 42% of them work unpaid for their families – mainly in agriculture (by working in the fields). Today, women hold a total of 14, 5% of seats in the Turkish parliament. (Women inStatistics, 2011)

In both Turkey and France the ratio of the executive managers' positions is held massively by men. While in France, the number of women executives is at 39.2 % and 17.1% for the position of CEO. In Turkey, this ratio is at 31% for women executives and 12 % for CEOs. Some descriptive statistics between the two countries are presented in Table.1.

Table.1 Descriptive statistics between France and Turkey.

	<b>Turkey</b>	<b>France</b>
<b>Population</b>	Women constitute 52% of the 79 million population in Turkey. July 2011	Women constitute 51.6% of the 63.8 million population in France. January 2011
<b>Literacy Rate</b>	90,45 % in Turkey	99,9 % in France
<b>Life expectancy at birth</b>	70.86 years for males, 74.78 years for females	84.8 years for females 78.2 years for males in 2011 (INED)
<b>Women in Parliament</b>	14% of women in Turkish parliament in 2011	26.9 % in 2012, against 18.5 % in 2007
<b>Participation rate in the labor market for women (for full-time job in workforce).</b>	28 % of women,	65 % in France.
<b>Manager and CEO</b>	31% of women executives and 12 % CEO	39 % women executives 17% CEO in France

## 1.2. Theoretical framework

The Gender Organization System (GOS) framework provides a holistic approach to study the issues relating to women's managerial advancement (Omar, Azura and Davidson, Marilyn J 2001). According to Fagenson (1993), to study gender-organization-system perspective, the opportunities for women managerial position are the consequence from the interaction of number of action, not the isolate event. To see the gender inequality in the workplaces, it is not only the finding of how the differences between men and women experiences, but also of the organization and system which are the main factors of the female discrimination in the workplaces. The gender-centered and organization structure perspectives are utilized to comprehend inappropriate characteristics of women who have underrepresented in top management positions (Fagenson, 1990).

Fagenson's gender-organization-system perspective recognized the instantaneous interaction between the individual, organization and society. However, this perspective suggests that the limited advancement of women in organizations is not due to either their gender and gendercentered perspective or the organization structure and its perspective, but that both together influence and form women's behavior at workplaces (Fagenson 1990, 1993)

Thus to look at the disadvantage and advantage of women in high position, the gender-organization-system perspective is the most useful theoretical framework for women in management research (Omar and Davidson, 2001). From gender-organization-system perspective argues that behavior in organizations can be comprehended as relations between gender, situations, and the social-institutional system where these interactions take place (Martin et al., 1983). In this perspective it contends that women's behavior is a product of both their gender and the organization structure (Fagenson& Horowitz, 1985).

### **3. Methodology**

This paper is an exploratory study and the article draws on data from a comparative study of gender equality at work in Turkey and France. Firstly, I will make such comparisons ashow Turkish women executives and French women executives are alike or different with regard to attitudes, experiences, growth, private/professional life differences, and future prospects. And then, this field study will explore how women in management perceive their career advancement opportunities and their satisfactions with work-family balance. And also what they expect organizations to be doing to support their advancement.

This field-work for this research set about identifying executive women and senior corporate executives who knew successful women in management. My goal was to match as best I could, the group in this study, to those in the earlier interview study of female executives in Turkey and France, so that responses could be compared. Although this study expanded beyond the industrial companies to financial, retail, utility and the other companies likely to have women at high levels. These levels were mostly middle management and top management and the majority of the interviewees work in international companies which are both located in France and Turkey.

It was not easy to obtain an interview with all thewomen executives. Fortunately, to contact a number of people my professional colleagues helped meto identify candidates or put me in contact with an influential person in a company that had women at high levels. Finally, after successfully contacting the companies, the field research was conducted in Turkey and France and generated 20 interviews with women executives who met my criteria.

All of the female executives had one thing in common: they held significant positions in their company and they have an extensive career background. In addition, they have also become role models for the others who admire what they have achieved and want to learn from them. Who are these women? What are these women like? Table.2 gives an overview of the sample population.

Table.2 Description of the interview participants

<b><u>France Turkey</u></b>		
<b>Sex</b>	10 female	10 female
<b>Number of companies*</b>	8	7
<b>Average age</b>	42 yrs.	44 yrs.
<b>Marital status</b>	1 partnered- 9 married	2 partnered – 8 married
<b>No. of Children</b>	1 or 2 children 1 of them no children.	9 of them 1 or 2 children-
*I interviewed the people who work in an international company which is located in both countries.		

### 3.1. Data Analyses

The field study of this project generated 20 semi-structured interviews with 12 main questions concerning their career background and the glass ceiling syndrome with staff from 12 international companies in France and Turkey. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted in French, Turkish and English. All the participants from both countries were very willing to participate in this research.

Turkish respondents were aged between 38 and 55, while French participants were aged between 30 and 55. The 16 respondents were married and 2 of them were partnered and the 2 of them were single. They have divisional titles of president, executive and senior vice president, director, and various others that were tied to such specialties as law, finance, economy, business administration. Table.3 and Table.4 outlines the profile and job descriptions of all participants in both countries.

Table.3 Demographic attributes of participants in Turkey.

<b>N.</b>	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>CExpertise</b>
1	Revna	41	single	1	HR Director
2	Nil	38	married	2	Cost. Interface Director
3	Melek	39	single	-	Managing Director
4	Elisabeth	58	married	2	CEO
5	Cigdem	40	married	1	HR Director
6	Canan	49	married	1	CEO
7	Ayşe	48	married	2	Member of the Board
8	Frederique	45	partnered	2	Marketing Director
9	Pinar	38	married	1	Technical Senior Manager



10	Aline	48	married	2	Managing Director
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Table.4 Demographic attributes of participants in France.

N.	Pseudonym	Age	Marital status	No.C	Expertise
1	Cecile	38	married	3	President of BPW Rhône-Alpes,
2	Celine	42	married	2	Stakeholder Marketing Director
3	Veronique	42	married	2	Marketing Director
4	Melanie	36	married	2	HR Director
5	Claire	30	married	1	Head of Process Improvement
6	Claude	52	married	2	HR Director
7	Delphine	41	married	3	Senior HR Business Partner
8	Helene	44	partnered	1	Corporate Development Director
9	Nadine	55	married	3	Purchasing Division Director
10	Karen	48	married	2	HR Director

In both countries, participants had attained higher education qualifications in fields such as engineering, dentistry, business, and law. In Turkey, 3 participants held at least a Master's degree from the USA, one of them a PhD degree, 4 of them had international work experience of about 6-9 years. All the participants had graduated from well-known universities in Turkey and France, they were therefore highly skilled, and this was reflected in their job positions. In France, 4 participants held a Master's degree and 1 woman, a PhD degree in science and biology, 6 of them had international work experience of a minimum of 8-9 years which gave them an opportunity to climb the career ladder and to be one step above their male counterparts.

While a total of six qualitative interviewees were working on the development of woman's network project in their organization for female workers, 2 of them were diversity-equality specialists and they were currently working on the subject of Women in Management for non-profit organizations in the context of French institutions, and 3 qualitative interviewees were working for equality in the workforce in Turkey.

### 3.2. Result

The data obtained was analyzed using of inductive content analysis (thematic analysis= to identify key themes, concepts and categories) on interview transcript. After successively reading the transcripts of the all interviews, I determined the main themes that have been identified by the interviewees.

The description of the themes is shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

Barriers for French women executives							
Corporate culture	Career Encouragers	Age of women	Personal compromises	Support of family	Education of family	Feeling guilty	Having a first baby
9/10	8/10	4/10	7/10	2/10	5/10	3/10	4/10

Table5: From the case study in France

The main obstacles which have been mentioned by French women executives are the culture of the organization, culture of the country, age of the women, career support, and education of the family, feeling guilty and the timing of having their first baby. These factors are completely influential in terms of career advancement for women. On the other hand, the main themes which were identified by the Turkish women executives are corporate (Country and Organization) culture, career support, age of women, personal compromises, education of family, number of infants and having external help from a nanny / maid at home.

Barriers for Turkish women executives							
Corporate culture	Career Encouragers	Age of women	Personal Compromises	Support of family	Education of family	Child	Assistant at home
8/10	7/10	6/10	6/10	7/10	3/10	3/10	6/10

Table6:From the case study in Turkey

According to these analysis results, three main themes were selected from the field study which weremost mentioned by women and also are the common points of the study. These include;

- ☞ Personal compromises,
- ☞ Career Encouragers,
- ☞ Corporate culture,

Personal compromises. Women do not particularly desire to succeed. This is the one of the main factors which is noted for 6/10 successful women in Turkey and 7/10 successful women in France. Many women who are at middle management positions seem to be not quite willing to apply for upper management positions because they cannot take the risk of bringing political conflicts, polemics and ambition into their family lives. These executives were “not willing to pay the price” to put family life on the back burner, according to several senior executives. This issue can be interpreted as a one of the common points of the research study. To summarize the subject, women create the real barrier to career advancement themselves.

However, when women get married, just after the marriage suddenly they find themselves confronted with **a choice**, of having either a career or having a baby and staying at home. A woman gets married and when she decides to have a baby, she feels that she cannot have a professional career and be a mother. If her husband earns enough she gives up work and stays at home.

*“I think the real barrier comes from women, when they have their first child, if they do not have enough encouragement and if they are not confident enough, they give up working and prefer to stay where they are, even if she has a solid educational background and good competencies. She does not believe that she will be able to manage the balance between work and family life. The only question we need to ask; what do women want to do? A career or a family life? This is the real question.” (Director)*

Moreover, a woman decides to stay at home because women often do not believe in their own personal skills and talent. It’s “because she is not confident” both women executives in France and in Turkey share this idea. This is the one of the reasons that she gave up her work earlier or she does not ask to be a candidate for a superior position at work. However, the female executives explained that women are not interested in high hierarchical positions because of the difficulty of reconciliation that is increasingly challenged.

*“The main obstacle is cultural. This is the syndrome of legitimacy. It could also be called the complex of usurpation. It always seems to infringe on our place, and that we must earn more than men. It is a very clear that women lack confidence and do not believe in their skills, and their legitimacy.” (Director)*

Moreover, 4/10 women executives in Turkey mentioned the culture of the family and that of the country where they were born. We do not see women in the workforce because even today, in some parts of Turkey, husbands do not let their wives work. Women cannot go to work and earn money. We can still see more a male chauvinistic culture in Turkey rather than France. This is the traditional demands of the husband’s family and it is a more frequent occurrence in the East of Turkey. Recent social trends indicate that Turkey is once more at the cross-roads of tradition, and modernization, religion and secularism, east and west, democracy and totalitarianism. (Ozkanli O., Ozbilgin M. 2002)

*“This attitude of men is completely related to the culture of the country. In some parts of the country, we can see violence against women but at the same time, there are 31% of women executives. It shows that Turkey is not a homogeneous country! When we research something in this country, it is necessary to take it in 2 different parts just like in Asia and Europe. I live in Istanbul, and I can say there are no career barriers for women here. If a woman makes a good decision about her private life, I mean, choosing her husband, having good organization at home with private help from a nanny or a maid, as well as family support, and an insightful boss, then all these good choices will allow her to make a comfortable step in her career advancement and of course give her a desire to succeed. But I cannot say the same thing for women who live in the East of Turkey because they do not have the same opportunities”.* (Member of the Board)

In short, as these quotations from the interviews show, the respondents' resistance and empowerment strategies mainly occur in spheres of education, work, marriage and family, this can be interpreted as the dichotomy of the private and the public spheres.

Career Encouragers, meeting career encouragers has played a key role in motivating them to achieve success in their current career paths. In this research, the majority of Turkish and French participants believed that the support of her husband is completely related to the career advancement of women. 7/10 of the interviewed women in Turkey and 8/10 of the women in France noted that the importance of receiving support from their spouse creates an important opportunity for their career advancement. 6/10 of them have some sort of assistance at home and 7/10 of them have big support from family in Turkey. 8/10 of the French women executives cited the importance of the husband's support. In my research, 4/10 French interviewees husbands work at home to be able to take care of the children. This is the choice of the couple.

*“I had a job offer from a large company in France; as a Global Marketing Leader. I discussed this with my husband; he pushed me and supported me to accept this job opportunity. It was hard but I took my decision, I took my son and moved to Paris. My husband stayed in Istanbul because he had a very good and successful job there. So I stayed for 9 years and my husband came once a month to see us and spend time with us. It was a very big sacrifice for him. He never said anything negative; on the contrary he was always very encouraging. Without his support I could not be where I am today as I am now the CEO of the company. As I always believe, behind every successful woman there is a very successful man, but behind an unsuccessful woman there is an unsuccessful man.”* (CEO of the Company)

The difference in the support system in these two countries is the support of the family in the case of Turkey. This is part of the culture of the country and the Mediterranean

culture this strong relationship and solidarity between family members' means greater opportunities for the career advancement for women with children.

Corporate culture, "Women do not know the way to climb the career ladder". This idea was the strongest common point in both countries. 8/10 women in Turkey and 9/10 women in France clearly indicated that the biggest responsibility comes from the organization and government. Most of the women were satisfied with the law of equality in the workforce which has been created in 2011 by the EU.\* On 14 November 2012 the European Commission proposed legislation with the aim of attaining a 40% objective of the under-represented sex in non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies, with the exception of small and medium enterprises. The aim of this new legislation is to accelerate progress towards a better gender balance on the corporate boards of European companies. 7/10 of the French women executives are members of a woman network program in their respective companies which strives to represent women's needs and expectations within the organization. The objective of these networks is to have increased equality in the workforce and discuss possible solutions to see more women on the board. In Turkey, this ratio is much lower. Only 4/10 Turkish women executives are working on this subject in addition to working with the government.

*"If we want to be a company that wins and remains as a market leader, the diversity of our customers and our markets must obviously be connected and represented. This is in terms of gender, but also in nationality, origin...etc. We cannot continue to function anymore with just white men scientists (in top management positions). This is no longer possible! That is why I am so glad concerning the equality law and quota for board positions. Finally we will be able to see some women in top management thanks to having a minimum of 40% of women on the Executive Board."* (Director)

The other most important support they mentioned; is having nursery care from a very early age and also having child day care in the company. In France, 7/10 of the interviewees indicated the importance of the support from the government, such as daycare, or kindergarten which accepts babies from two months of age. In this respect, these childcare systems are good examples of governmental moves that facilitate advancement for professional women in France.

In Turkey, nursery and kindergarten is only acceptable for children who are at least 24 months old. Many mothers, who work within a company, do not have access to adequate institutional support. This is the situation in Turkey today. Maternity leave, working hours, workplace nursery systems have not been sufficiently created, which is a serious problem for working mothers who wish to have a child and work. The new Turkish government is currently working on the subject of nurseries in big companies. However these measures are not fully in operation yet and for this reason, 8/10 Turkish women executives have a maid/child minder at home and 7/10 of them receive extensive family support in Turkey. Without these extra support networks, professional Turkish women in top management positions would find it to

\* [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/121114\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/121114_en.htm)

be very difficult to advance in their careers.

*“I have twins who are 5 years old; my parents sometimes take care of them. But firstly, the biggest support comes from my husband and the second one is of having assistance at home. When I travel, I feel guilty but I know that they will have a good time and be comfortable at home with my home help. This is a really important support for me. Otherwise I could not accept the job conditions easily. But this is the price to pay. If I do not work I will not be able to pay for the activities of my children, so this idea makes me feel very strong and ambitious. And I try to motivate women who are afraid to have a career in my company and women around me.” (Director)*

#### **4. Discussion**

Three general categories emerged in this research as potential barriers for women in the two countries. The paper set out to show that women in both countries share common perspectives for their career advancement despite geographical, historical, economic and cultural differences. The work/life balance, having children, culture of the organization education of family and age are completely impacted for the career advancement of women. According to GOS approach, women do this because: (1) they have not learned to set goals and plan ahead as have men; and/or (2) because their limited promotion rate have caused them to focus on the task (Riger and Galligan, 1980) and/or, (3) because, as they are women — a group not often taken seriously in society — little attention and effort has been devoted to helping them surge ahead in their organizations. (Fagenson, 1990)

Firstly, the idea of the “Women do not know how to climb the ladder.” was the most common point and very current subject for both countries in the research. Women do not know how to take the risk and so therefore they take fewer risks than men and are less likely to seek promotion, and consequently they appear to lack ambition. While the socio-emotional support from women's mentoring networks is valued and appreciated by women, women are less likely to have powerful career sponsors who actively advocate for them, when decisions about developmental assignments and promotions are made. To see more women in the Turkish workforce, firstly we need to encourage women to work, and to do this, education must play a central role. Managers must have goals for recruitment and promotion of women in their departments and divisions, and achievement of these goals-including such factors as climate for gender equity and managerial support for women-should be measured and reinforced by the performance management and reward system. (Valcour M., 2012)

In addition, in certain parts of the country, in Turkey, there is a clear need to inform men who do not let their wives work. And also in both countries, we need to teach the way to success and how women can climb the professional ladder and conciliate their professional and family life. I would like to underline that just 25% of the total workforce in Turkey are women compared to 65% in France. If women really have the competencies and sufficient willpower, they have a greater chance to advance in their career compared to their counterparts in France. This is mainly due to the fact that they have less competition (there are by definition fewer

female candidates for top positions) than French women have when applying for a high management position in France.

In the case of Turkey, it is significant to highlight the importance of family support or having external or extra support at home. In studies conducted by H. Kabasakal (2004), most executive women in Turkey are married and have either one or two children. And also, several studies conducted in Western societies show that given the immense household demands on married women, most women feel the need to make a choice between their careers and their private life. On the other hand, the availability of low-paid maids/ nannies in Turkey allows women managers to delegate the housework and child-rearing responsibilities to fulltime employed maids. In France, one of the main sources of support comes from the government. For the French participants, having a nursery/ kindergarten at the workplace facilitates their work and family life balance. They save time. In this research, as we can see the social and economic differences between the two countries.

And secondly, this study confirms that age plays an important role in the career evolution of the respondents. The decision to have a baby must be taken at the right time. Having children brings a lot of responsibilities to family life and this is the reason why many women decide to leave their careers prematurely so as to raise their children adequately. Maternity leave is the biggest career break, and needs active management to ensure that women go back to work. For this reason, employers occasionally hesitate to promote women because they are afraid that women will choose their families first or they will leave on maternity leave for long time. As Laurence Parisot, Head of the French MEDEF explained: “if maternity leave is a problem for companies because women leave for 4 months, we need to create a new law which will oblige men to take paternity leave. In this way, bosses will not question the fact that if women take maternity leave then the men will be entitled to have time off as well.”

## **5. Conclusion**

Firstly, Ragin's suggest that non-work roles affect career advancement because of household responsibilities, role expectations and career interruptions. These responsibilities make feel women guilty. Powell (1999) mentioned that the “typical executive job has enormous responsibilities, time demands and pressures, which eventually calls for considerable sacrifices in personal life”. As a consequence, women are often less willing than men to make such substantial sacrifices as many want to have children, spend time with the family or simply do not want such a big responsibility in their daily business life. (Akpinar-Sposito, 2011)

Secondly, the government and organization may help women to improve their career development opportunities. The initiative of EU concerning Equality Law has been appreciated by most women. It will be the gait for career advancement for women. It will give the opportunity for women to show men what they are made of. In fact, the most successful initiatives are integrated with the organization's core strategy and processes from the top down. The CEO must identify gender equity and diversity as a core strategic priority; in turn, this organizational priority must be translated into operational goals and processes at every

level of the organization. (Valcour M., 2012). There is therefore a need for businesses to diagnose the causes of the 'glass ceiling', necessarily contingent in their organization, before you consider the most suitable way to help women to break it. (Landrieux-Kartochian S., 2005)

Finally legislation will bring changes. With the comments of the respondents, the conclusion explains that finding a solution to break the glass ceiling for women in middle management from who want to get to the top, the biggest help must be come government. The European Commission's Vice President, Viviane Reding proposed a new law that would enforce quotas of 40% for women's representation on European corporate boards by 2020. Experience suggests that this is the most effective way of substantially increasing the representation of women in senior management. These strategies facilitate women's entry into managerial career paths

After all the statistics are stripped away, though, one naked truth persists: Women are just as capable as men. Terry Di Russo, a professor at the University of Connecticut, has conducted extensive research on the glass ceiling, says, "Great ideas have no gender, race, ethnic background or age." Women may have to work a little harder to reach the top, but it can and does happen. In the not-so-distant future, with a little extra effort on everyone's part, more women could be buttoning up their suits and heading into that office.

Note;

1. These descriptions were coded in my previous article which was presented on 2nd International Conference on Leadership, Technology and Innovation Management (ICLTIM-2012- <http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00738519/>).

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